

FLASH
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 FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TUSCO 74//

TO GENERAL SCORCROFT

INFO BILL GREENER (PRESS OFFICE)

UNCLAS WH51512

TUSCO 74

AUGUST 15, 1975

COUP IN BANGLADESH

FOR BACKGROUND USE:

THE ARMY MOUNTED A SUCCESSFUL COUP EARLY TODAY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF MUJIBUR RAHMAN. THERE HAVE BEEN CONFLICTING REPORTS OVER THE FATE OF MUJIB. SOME CLAIM HE IS UNDER HOUSE ARREST, OTHERS ASSERT HE HAS BEEN KILLED.

FORMER COMMERCE MINISTER KHODAKAR MUSHTAQ AHMED HAS BEEN NAMED PRESIDENT. MARTIAL LAW HAS BEEN IMPOSED, A 24-HOUR CURFEW IS IN EFFECT IN Dacca, AND THE AIRPORT HAS BEEN CLOSED. THE COUNTRY NOW WILL REPORTEDLY BE CALLED THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

IT IS NOT YET CLEAR EXACTLY WHICH ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY WERE INVOLVED OR WHAT THE NATURE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE.

AHMED, HOWEVER, IS A MODERATE WHO HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE MOST PRO-WESTERN CABINET MEMBER AND LEADER OF THE MODERATE FACTION OF THE RULING PARTY.

POPULAR REACTION TO THE COUP IS THUS FAR UNKNOWN. WHILE FEW BENGALLEES HAVE DARED TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST MUJIB IN RECENT MONTHS, DISCONTENT HAD BEEN WIDESPREAD WITH HIS RULE, ESPECIALLY HIS INABILITY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE COUNTRY'S CONTINUING SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

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MC FARLANE, SEC FILE

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DISAFFECTION, DISCONTENT, AND DISILLUSIONMENT IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD AMONG MILITARY OFFICERS AND POSSIBLY IN THE RANKS OVER HIS INABILITY TO CHECK NEPOTISM, CORRUPTION, AND MALADMINISTRATION. DISPLEASURE HAD BEEN ALSO GROWING OVER HIS LATEST AUTOCRATIC CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT SINCE ESTABLISHING A PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM EARLIER THIS YEAR.

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Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE COUP IN BANGLADESH? WILL WE CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT?

A. IT IS PREMATURE TO MAKE ANY JUDGEMENTS ABOUT THE NEW GOVERNMENT. WE ARE, OF COURSE, FOLLOWING EVENTS IN BANGLADESH, AND OUR REPORTS FROM THERE INDICATE NO INJURY TO OR LOSS OF AMERICAN LIFE OR PROPERTY. I HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE YOU BEYOND THAT.

FYI: FOR DETAILS ON THE GOVERNMENT IN BANGLADESH, THE NATURE OF THE COUP, ETC., REFER TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

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PORTUGAL

Q. YESTERDAY IN HIS SPEECH IN BIRMINGHAM SEC. KISSINGER SPOKE OUT IN FAVOR OF THE "MODERATE ELEMENTS WHO SEEK TO BUILD PORTUGAL BY DEMOCRATIC MEANS," AND HE WARNED THE SOVIETS AGAINST INTERFERING IN PORTUGUESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS. WHAT ARE WE PREPARED TO DO IN PORTUGAL AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES?

A. AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN FOLLOWING THE MATTER VERY CLOSELY. HE DISCUSSED THE SITUATION IN HIS MEETINGS WITH NATO ALLIES AT HELSINKI, AND HE PLANS TO CONTINUE CLOSE CONSULTATIONS ON THIS ISSUE. THE SECRETARY'S ADDRESS YESTERDAY REFLECTED AS WELL THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN OVER ATTEMPTS BY AN ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MINORITY TO SUBVERT THE EFFORTS OF THE MODERATE MAJORITY TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN PORTUGAL.

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